

March 2004



# MONTANA GEAR UP

GAINING EARLY AWARENESS & READINESS FOR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education / Montana University System

## GEAR UP



RIGHT CHOICES FOR FUTURE

## Director's Message: by Sandy Merdinger

In our office there has been a lot of talk about P-20 recently. I thought you might be interested to learn a little about P-20 if you haven't heard of it before. First of all, P-20 is one of many shorthand names for an integrated system of learning from pre-kindergarten or preschool through graduate school. You may have heard of the seamless system of education also referred to as K-16 (kindergarten through baccalaureate degree). The goal of P-20/K-16 is to improve student achievement by getting young children off to a good start in their education, raising academic standards, improving transitions for students from one educational level to the next and increasing teacher quality.

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In October 2002 the Governor's Office, the Board of Public Education and the Board of Regents co-sponsored a Pathways to College Roundtable to develop recommendations related to preparation, access, success and finance issues for low-income students within a P-16 framework. The major goals of the meeting were to introduce the concept of P-16 education and launch a multi-level statewide dialogue on access, success and financial aid for low-income students.

As a result of the Pathways Roundtable, the Board of Education (comprised of the Board of Public Education and the Board of Regents) formed a P-20 Committee. Starting this academic year the committee has been assigned staff and is meeting. Committee members are Regents Richard Roehm, Lynn Hamilton and Lila Taylor; Board of Public Education members include Diane Fladmo, Patty Myers and Erik Engellant. The committee is addressing four issues at this time. They include distance delivery of education, dual enrollment, writing and math assessment alignment and a public information campaign.

For this newsletter I address the public information campaign. The public information campaign was kicked off March 3 in Helena with a group of stakeholders coming together to determine the best way to move forward on a campaign to address the importance of education for all Montanans. The charge of the meeting was "Disseminate positive messages promoting education for Montana families, encour-

aging high expectations and college readiness for all students, regardless of income or education status of the family." That really epitomizes what GEAR UP is all about! With good participation from many of the stakeholders, people brainstormed who needs to get the message that staying in school is important and that a quality education is a wise investment for all Montanans. At this time the facilitators are synthesizing the information from the meeting. It is exciting to see OPI, OCHE, the Governor's office, Department of Labor, MEA-MFT, Montana Guaranteed Student Loan Program, Student Assistance Foundation and several other stakeholders come together to work toward a seamless system of education for Montana students! In future newsletters there will be information on other P-20 issues as they relate to GEAR UP.

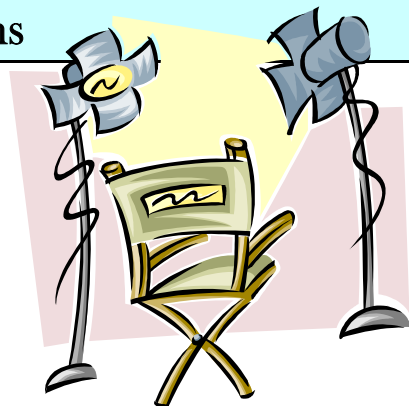
## The GEAR UP Spotlight: Hays-Lodgepole and Simms

**Hays-Lodgepole K-6 Elementary** has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in reading and math for the 2002-03 school year. This was accomplished by a collaborative effort between students, teachers, administrators and parents. Key elements in achieving AYP included: test-taking strategies, aligning standards and benchmarks to the curriculum, weekly meetings, parent involvement and teacher-made assessments. Another contributing factor was the Success For All reading program that is funded by the Reading Excellence (REA) grant through OPI.



Hays-Lodge Pole trustee, Robert Fox presents a beautiful star quilt to OPI officials in honor of the efforts of the department's work with the district in attaining AYP.

In recognition of achieving AYP status, the Hays-Lodgepole staff presented a star quilt to the Title I staff. BJ Granbery, Title I Director for Montana, accepted the quilt on behalf of her staff which includes, Ron Lukenbill, Terry Teichrow, and Joan Morris. It is a tradition among many tribes in Indian Country to honor those who have helped in some way. To give a Star Quilt is to show the utmost respect, honor, and admiration to a person.



**Simms:** Have I got a web site for you (<http://www.tigers.3rivers.net/vaughn/index.html>) ! As part of the Web Design class at Simms High School, Hydee Rushton has demonstrated great ability in designing and bringing to life the Vaughn School web site. Beginning with a few basic pages, Hydee has developed it into a fully functional resource filled with up-to-date lunch menus, sports schedules, and faculty and staff information all within a dazzling design of school colors and graphics. She has become a wiz with button creation, heading design, incorporation of animated images, not to mention creating a few animations of her own. Hydee simply glowed when she accomplished her latest feat - the addition of colored scroll bars. All in all, Hydee shows a lot of talent, skill, and work ethic. As part of a dynamic duo with Rachel Lyle, Hydee now maintains the site, updating information regularly and adding even more style and glitz as time allows. She demonstrates responsibility by keeping the site attractive, professional, and current. Nice work, Hydee!

## The Montana Indian Student Fee Waiver:

The Board of Regents, in its effort to provide access to higher education for all Montana residents, has established fee waivers to assist eligible residents in meeting the cost of education at the units of the Montana University System. **The Montana Indian Student Fee Waiver** was implemented to encourage students who would otherwise not be able to attend college to do so. Each year the Montana University System approves over \$1 million in Montana Indian Fee Waivers (Board Policy #940.13).

Seniors who are at least one fourth Indian blood and are planning to attend a unit of the Montana University System next year need to contact the financial aid office at that institution to apply for the Indian Student Fee Waiver. Awarding of the waiver is based on financial aid. For more information on the Indian Student Fee Waiver contact the financial aid office where you are intending to enroll or:

Ellen Swaney, Director  
American Indian/Minority Achievement  
Phone: (406) 444-6570, Fax: (406) 444-1469  
[Eswaney@oche.montana.edu](mailto:Eswaney@oche.montana.edu)  
[www.montana.edu/wwwoche/](http://www.montana.edu/wwwoche/)

To read the complete fee waiver policy, go to: [www.montana.edu/wochelp/borpol/bor900/94013.htm](http://www.montana.edu/wochelp/borpol/bor900/94013.htm)

The Advanced Placement Program at the Office of **College Success Initiative: "SpringBoard"** Public Instruction, along with the College Board would like to send some English teachers from GEAR UP schools to the College Success Initiative: SpringBoard, a special session of the Pacific Northwest AP Institute in Bellevue, Washington on June 28-July 1, 2004.

SpringBoard is a new program from the College Board designed to prepare all students in grades 6-12 for AP course work and success in college. It connects rigorous standards, professional development, instructional resources and diagnostic assessments through web-based technology to provide a pathway to college for all students. The College Board will pay for teacher registration, and the Office of Public Instruction will award AP grants to cover travel, meals and lodging. The Office of Public Instruction's AP grant application can be downloaded from the Advanced Placement Incentive web page at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/AdvPlacement/index.html>. Teachers will need to complete the budget page and pages 1 and 5. If the school already has an AP grant, send a brief email or letter with the required information from page 5 and the desired amount of increase to:

Kathleen Mollohan, Advanced Placement Program Administrator  
Montana Office of Public Instruction  
PO Box 202501  
Helena, MT 59620-2501  
Or email: [kathym@state.mt.us](mailto:kathym@state.mt.us)

## **March Reminders:**

- Applications have been sent to the 72 students eligible to compete for the Montana GEAR UP Pathways Scholarship. The due date is: March 31st
- The end of year Liaisons meeting will be held May 5th in Bozeman.
- The National GEAR UP Conference is July 25-28 in Washington D.C. Montana GEAR UP will pay for one administrator, one counselor and one liaison to attend. If you would like to be considered to attend this year's conference please complete the brief application which will be available on the GEAR UP website after March 23 and return it to your grant manager.
- Montana GEAR UP recently received proposals for the summer programs. Proposals are under review and will be selected soon. Promotional materials from summer programs will be available and distributed to schools by March 26.
- GEAR UP received 1,069 Essay Contest submissions. Awards will be announced by mid-April.
- There are 220 cohort students that are scheduled to graduate this spring! How are you planning on giving them special recognition?
- It's easier to keep track of matching funds if you document them as you go rather than try to think back at the end of the year. Contact Kelly Hert if you have any questions about matching.
- Be sure to submit your articles for the GEAR UP Spotlight to your grant manager by the 10th of the month to be included in the next newsletter.
- This newsletter is also available on the web! Visit us at: [www.gearup.montana.edu](http://www.gearup.montana.edu)

## Montana & National Items of Interest:

GEAR UP Colleagues: you may have already heard about the following two papers just released. In case you haven't, here's the scoop on both of them:

- 1) The National Governor's Association has issued a new guide for Governors: "Helping All Students Achieve Secondary and Postsecondary Success." The report has five broad policy guidelines:

1. Set a statewide benchmark for postsecondary attainment.
2. Create and support an integrated K-16 data system.
3. Better align K-12 and higher education expectations and incentives.
4. Promote more learning options.
5. Focus on low-performing high schools.

You can download the report at: <http://www.nga.org/cda/files/0310READY.pdf>

The association's news release is at: [http://www.nga.org/nga/newsRoom/1,1169,C\\_PRESS\\_RELEASE^D\\_6479,00.html](http://www.nga.org/nga/newsRoom/1,1169,C_PRESS_RELEASE^D_6479,00.html)

- 2) The Pathways to College Network released "A Shared Agenda: A Leadership Challenge to Improve College Access and Success." The report provides a number of recommendations, specifically focusing on three areas:

1. Making a college-preparatory curriculum standard for all students.
2. Providing financial-aid commitments earlier so students are more informed and can plan accordingly how to pay for college
3. Using data and assessments to develop effective support programs so that all students can achieve at a college level.

You can download the Pathways report at: [http://www.pathwaystocollege.net/Pub/pub\\_products\\_findings.html](http://www.pathwaystocollege.net/Pub/pub_products_findings.html)

Do you know some one that would like to be added to the newsletter distribution list? Please let us know!

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GEAR UP Fax Number:  
406-444-0425

Montana GEAR UP website  
<http://www.gearup.montana.edu>

Montana Guaranteed Student Loan website:  
<http://www.mgslp.state.mt.us/>

National GEAR UP website:  
<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/gearup/index.html>